CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SIX HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 12 March 1992, at 10 a.m.

President: Mr. Mutuale Kikanke (Zaire)

GE.92-60626/3389H

The PRESIDENT: I declare open the 616th plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I would like to recall that today, immediately following the plenary meeting, the Conference will hold an informal meeting on the substance of agenda item 2, entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". I would like to inform you that on the list of speakers for today are the representatives of Mexico, Cuba and China. I give the floor to the representative of Mexico, Ambassador Marín Bosch.

Mr. MARIN BOSCH (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, you have been guiding our work with diplomatic skill and tact. For various reasons, this Conference is at a difficult stage and we nurture the hope that during your term the organizational questions that are still awaiting agreement will be solved. We would like to place on record our appreciation for the way in which Ambassador Naste Calovski and his delegation conducted the work of the CD at the beginning of this first part of the 1992 session. My Government wishes to express its deepest gratitude to Ambassador Miljan Komatina for his valuable professional and human contribution towards lightening our responsibilities. We thank the United Nations Secretary-General for appointing our good friend Ambassador Vicente Berasategui as his Personal Representative and Secretary-General of this Conference. His experience will be of benefit to us all and we offer him the full cooperation of our delegation.

1992 is a year of anniversaries. It is the quincentenary of the meeting of two worlds, America and Europe. It is also the twentieth anniversary of the Convention on biological weapons and of the first agreements between the United States and the Soviet Union on strategic arms limitation (SALT I). And a month ago, on 14 February, several events were held in Mexico City to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the signing of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco). And on that occasion President Carlos Salinas de Gortari stated, inter alia:

> "This historic document, which played a pioneering role in the struggle for disarmament, was a demonstration of what can be achieved through dialogue and cooperation for civilized coexistence among nations.
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> "In this way the Treaty of Tlatelolco constituted a major step forward in the long search for general and complete disarmament to which peoples aspire.
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> "In the struggle for disarmament we in Mexico recognize our national interest. Our geography and the force of our history lead us to maintain an attachment to the law and respect for a value which is fundamental - the sovereignty of the nation."

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

For his part, my country's Minister for Foreign Affairs stated:

> "Mexico will continue to champion approaches to international security based on an order which offers greater fairness and fewer weapons. The quest for a world free from weapons of mass destruction, beginning with nuclear weapons, must be part of the future world order ... A regime of non-proliferation, genuine and universal, is more necessary today than ever before."

Thirty years ago, on 14 March 1962, the inaugural meeting of the Conference of the Eighteen-Nation Committee on Disarmament (ENDC) was held in this Council Chamber. On that day the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Mr. Omar Loutfi, stated:

> "The role of the United Nations in the developments leading up to the establishment of the Disarmament Committee and to the convening of the present Conference demonstrates once again the determination of the international community that every possible effort be made to end the intensifying armaments race. The Members of the United Nations, in exercising their responsibilities under the Charter in the field of disarmament, have recognized the usefulness of direct talks between the major Powers as well as the practical contributions which may be made by the less powerful nations and, in fact, by all Members of the Organization. The recent General Assembly resolutions"

- declared Mr. Loutfi in 1962 -

> "related to disarmament would seem to indicate that the Members of the United Nations intend to persist in this field until the world's deep and growing concern has been transmuted into concrete achievements."

For three decades the members of ENDC did "persist in this field" to bring about disarmament and thus curb "the world's growing concern". At the beginning there were 18 nations (although in point of fact there were 17, because France refused to participate as long as the unusual institution of the Soviet-United States co-chairmanship was maintained). The partial nuclear-test-ban Treaty and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons were concluded. Then, with the initial formula of political and military balance in mind, the membership of the Conference was expanded.

In the 1970s, a Convention on biological weapons and the ENMOD Convention were drawn up. In 1978, following the special General Assembly devoted to disarmament, the Conference was again enlarged. With 40 members, including China and France, the CD became the "single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum". But, 14 years after its reincarnation, the CD has still not managed to conclude a single multilateral disarmament agreement. It is true that much progress has been made in the drafting of a convention for the complete elimination of chemical weapons but, unfortunately, we still do not have an agreed text.

(Mr. Marín Bosch, Mexico)

In recent years we have managed to "transmute the world's growing concern for disarmament", at least with regard to the relations between the two main military Powers. And this is important. But it has certainly not been as a consequence of the efforts made at this Conference. Since 1978, when it was baptized the "sole negotiating organ", the CD has not been notable for its "concrete achievements". Instead, it is forces and changes outside the CD that have managed to transmute the world's concern for disarmament.

In the library on disarmament, here in the United Nations, and in the offices of our respective permanent missions, there are dozens of voluminous tomes which contain a plethora of working papers and mountains of words which have been uttered in this room since 1962. We have left behind the bipolar world of 1962. Yet it should be remembered that in that year of 1962, in the midst of the cold war, we were able to lay down the priorities that have guided our work for three decades: nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament under effective international control. For my delegation, these priorities are still valid and we consider that today more than ever we must devise concrete measures for nuclear disarmament with a view to the total elimination of these weapons of mass destruction. Today more than ever before it is indispensable to prepare a comprehensive programme of disarmament that will serve as a guide in examining and solving in an orderly fashion the varied and complex range of problems in this area. Every day we are told emphatically that a new world has dawned, a world based on rules that are now universally acceptable. Everywhere we see important changes in the political and economic spheres. Major nuclear disarmament measures are announced and efforts are made, not without enormous difficulties, to dismantle the military apparatus and weapons factories. Armies and military budgets are being cut. But here, in the Council Chamber, we continue with our rituals of the past. As on previous occasions, we have started our 1992 session with a repetition of discussions which are somewhat futile. Moreover, this year there has been a fight because of the proposal that a new item should be added to the agenda, whose inclusion, for very understandable reasons, has been resisted by those who uphold - or think they are upholding - the priorities of our work programme.

Nevertheless, the Conference on Disarmament is still drifting. And it will be hard to find a new path if we remain tied to an obsolete pattern of work. Every day it is more difficult to justify our existence in a changing world. The Conference should not waste its time on palliatives. We cannot agree, as we did in 1976 when the ENMOD Convention was "negotiated", to start work with the sole purpose of "producing something". Nobody denies the importance of the negotiations on the chemical weapons convention, in the Ad Hoc Committee which is being led with dedication and enthusiasm by Ambassador von Wagner. We are not referring to that item on the agenda, but to the way in which we tackle the other questions. In some institutions the pupils or inmates are given some pointless tasks just to pass the time, to keep them occupied ("busywork" in English). Something like this is happening in the CD.

(Mr. Marin Bosch, Mexico)

Let us decide where we want to go and explore how we will define this new course. We could, as my delegation suggested at the inaugural meeting on 21 January last, exchange ideas in an informal way so as to air many of the questions which are hampering or complicating our work and which at present can only be dealt with in the President's consultations on Wednesdays, in the slow process of talks in and between the various groups or, still worse, in the lengthy mechanism of bilateral contacts. Perhaps we could ask the Secretary-General of the Conference to convene periodic meetings of heads of delegation to discuss, without papers, without records and without interpreters, those questions pertaining to our work which are considered to be of general interest.

To sum up and conclude: the present structure of the Conference no longer has any point and it is becoming an obstacle for making progress on agreed ideas. Our methods of work are counter-productive and we cannot continue to maintain this fiction of having three groups (plus China) without prejudicing the future of the CD. Thirty years on from its creation and 14 from its renaissance the Conference should, in its next incarnation, better reflect the structure of the world and have, amongst its members, those countries that have something to contribute to its deliberations and those that, because of their military might or political situation, it would be absurd to leave out.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): I thank the representative of Mexico for his statement and for his kind words addressed to the Chair. I give the floor to the representative of Cuba, Mrs. Bauta Solés.

Mrs. BAUTA SOLES (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): I will deliver my statement this morning in English, for reasons which will become apparent immediately.

(continued in English)

The delegations of Algeria, Brazil, Cuba, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Mexico, Mongolia, Morocco, Myanmar, Nigeria, Pakistan, Peru, Sri Lanka, Venezuela, Yugoslavia and Zaire have asked me to make the following statement.

The forty-sixth General Assembly of the United Nations adopted resolution 46/38 B by 123 votes in favour.

A majority of the international community therefore clearly favours the continuation and conclusion of the work on the comprehensive programme of disarmament. The resolution recommends the conclusion of the work on the CPD which embraces issues which recently have been the subject of many important international gatherings. These include the role of the United Nations and the continuing relevance of its Charter; the efforts to ensure peace, stability and cooperation; the commitment to collective security; peace-keeping efforts; nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects regarding weapons of mass destruction, to name but a few of those

(Mrs. Bauta Solés, Cuba)

brought to the attention of the international community in the final statement of the Security Council summit held in New York on 31 January 1992 and which have already been examined in depth in the multilateral negotiations that have been devoted throughout the years to a CPD.

For this reason, among others, the significance that the large majority of countries attribute to the comprehensive programme of disarmament should not be mistakenly interpreted as the inertia of yesterday's priorities, but rather as the harbinger of a viable and practical way to approach the issues of today.

This basic reasoning behind resolution 46/38 B is that "a comprehensive programme of disarmament would provide an appropriate framework for the various multilateral, bilateral and unilateral initiatives and proposals put forward recently", and adds: "Considering that the present international situation is conducive to a renewed effort towards the conclusion of the comprehensive programme of disarmament".

The 1989 final report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly of that same year regarding CPD states that: "The Ad Hoc Committee also agreed that it shall resume work with a view to resolving the outstanding issues in the near future, when circumstances are more conducive to making progress in this regard".

We are everywhere reminded that the international climate has changed and is perhaps more conducive to greater multilateral understanding and cooperation. And yet the Conference on Disarmament is not able to implement resolution 46/38 B which calls for the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the comprehensive programme of disarmament and the solution of the outstanding issues and conclusion of those negotiations.

The delegations which I mentioned at the beginning are convinced that a comprehensive programme of disarmament will be beneficial to all States as we seek to establish an agreed framework for future multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Just now the distinguished representative of Cuba, Mrs. Magda Bauta Solés, made a statement on behalf of the delegations of 20 States proposing that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Comprehensive Programme of Disarmament should be re-established. On behalf of the Chinese delegation I would like to express our support for this proposal.

The Chinese delegation has all along attached importance to agenda item 8 of the CD, "Comprehensive programme of disarmament". Under the guidance of the distinguished late Ambassador of Mexico, His Excellency Mr. Robles, and with the joint efforts of various delegations, some progress had been made on this item. Later, due to reasons well known to all, the work of the Ad Hoc Committee was interrupted. In the view of the Chinese delegation, in the present circumstances it is appropriate to resume work on the formulation

(Mr. Hu, China)

of the comprehensive programme of disarmament and to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee in accordance with General Assembly resolution 46/38 B, so as to build on the texts already agreed to, with a view to resolving the outstanding issues.

Mr. SHANNON (Canada): I have two brief announcements to make. First, in my statement to this Conference last week I introduced a number of documents. Since then my delegation has received the latest edition of the compendium of statements and working papers on outer space, produced by the Arms Control and Disarmament Division of my Government. This edition, which covers the 1991 session of the CD and the Ad Hoc Committee, has been assigned the number CD/1142 and will be distributed to delegations shortly. I hope that delegations will continue to find the compendium a useful reference tool and that it will contribute to our work on this important subject.

My second point concerns the site of the headquarters of the chemical weapons convention. I am pleased to be authorized to announce today that Canada supports the Netherlands offer to provide the site for the CWC headquarters.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): Are there any delegations wishing to take the floor at this stage? There are not. I should now like to make a brief closing statement because this is the last plenary meeting under the presidency of Zaire.

The last four weeks of the work of the Conference have been conducted on the basis of decisions that had already been taken by the presidency during the informal consultations which preceded the opening of the annual session, as well as under the presidency of my distinguished predecessor, Ambassador Calovski. My efforts focused on the implementation of those decisions, particularly the organizational issues that were still in abeyance. We finally proceeded to the designation of the chairmen of the ad hoc committees on the prevention of an arms race in space, effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of such weapons, and on radiological weapons. The Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Space has already begun its work and I hope that the other ad hoc committees will follow in the days to come. Consultations were also continued on the request addressed to us by the General Assembly in its resolution 46/36 L, entitled "Transparency in armaments". Open-ended consultations provided us with a starting-point to progress in the work on this issue. A consensus emerged on the designation of a special coordinator for all the aspects relating to the question, including the organizational aspects and the substantive aspects on this subject. Consultations on the designation of a special coordinator are to continue. But I consider that we have also achieved some progress on certain organizational and substantive issues which are part of the General Assembly's request. As of today we are beginning a series of informal meetings on the substance of items 2 and 3 of the agenda, which I am sure will be very useful in our future work.

(The President)

Because we are on the eve of the thirtieth anniversary of the Conference, we should be aware of the urgency and importance of achieving progress in our consultations and our work and, in particular, we hope that we will be able to complete the work on a multilateral treaty concerning chemical weapons. The Conference has been encouraged to intensify its deliberations by the visits from distinguished figures who have presented the views of their Governments. We specially noted the presence of the Vice-Chancellor of Germany, His Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Genscher. I had already had an opportunity to say how honoured we were by his presence, but also by his cooperation, not only because he is Vice-Chancellor but also because his country and his delegation have made a particularly noteworthy contribution in the work of our Conference. I am also referring to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Zaire, Mr. Raphael Ahuntu, the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of Poland, Mr. Andrzej Kurkiewicz, and the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Italy, Ambassador Bruno Bottai. I personally greatly appreciated the contributions they made and I think that I am reflecting the sentiments of the Conference in saying that all of us together express our gratitude to them here.

I would like to say that above and beyond our differences in area of origin and in our respective views and differences in history, our Conference continues to be the crucible where a universal awareness can be moulded and should be moulded of one of the greatest values of the human family - I have in mind the right to security. Yesterday, today, tomorrow and the day after tomorrow, this is a right that belongs to each and every one; no nation can or could appropriate it for its exclusive use. At a time when the tempest of democracy, the hurricane of rights and freedoms are sweeping the world, across Siberia and in the palms of the tropics, it is here, through our work, that we are participating in the construction and erection of one of the principal pillars of the edifice of peace in international relations. May we in so doing earn the gratitude of our children and our future generations. The lanterns of the millenium are going out and everywhere we are presented with signs of the twilight of one period and the bells are tolling the knell of our millenium, but at the same time announcing the dawn of a new era. On the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Conference, we are called upon to move slowly and surely to promote the climate of mutual trust. I remember a quotation from Napoleon Bonaparte who said somewhere that every day of lost time is a chance of future misfortune. Bearing in mind the creative and innovative imagination of the human spirit in the field of new weapons, I could paraphrase this by saying that every year of lost time is a chance of future misfortune. This means that it is not fitting to hesitate to grant one another all the measures that have the potential to initiate, prompt and stimulate trust among us. Among these measures and by way of simple example, I might mention transparency. This is a word which, like any new concept, is laden at once with hope and fear, the fear of falling victim to bluff, the fear of being tricked. Yet, this word is a key word of the new times. It is one of those words that are symbols of tomorrow and of the new order among nations. But - and we must also be aware of this - it is also one of those

(The President)

I thank each and every one of you for your contributions. I also thank you for the honour that you have bestowed upon my country, Zaire, and you are aware how much I appreciate that honour because the chance to sit in the President's chair does not come every year. I take this opportunity to thank our Secretary-General for his very valuable contribution. I will not forget the special coordinators and the chairmen of the ad hoc committees, as well as the entire administrative service and the interpreters. I conclude by wishing my successor, Ambassador Semichi of Algeria, success in his duties. Those were the few thoughts in the form of a closing statement on the part of the President.

The secretariat has distributed today, at the request of the President, the timetable of meetings to be held by the Conference and its subsidiary bodies next week. As usual, the timetable is purely indicative and subject to change as necessary. Allow me to emphasize that the first meeting on item 3 of the agenda, entitled "Prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters", will be held on Thursday, 19 March, immediately following the plenary meeting of the Conference. If there are no objections I will be able to take it that the Conference adopts this timetable.

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from French): There are no other matters to consider today. With your permission I will now adjourn the plenary meeting. However, before doing so, I should like to remind you once again that in accordance with the timetable for this week, the Conference will hold an informal meeting on agenda item 2 in five minutes' time. The next plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament will take place on Thursday, 19 March, at 10 a.m. sharp.

The meeting rose at 10.55 a.m.